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R 250432Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7207
INFO RUEHAE/AMEMBASSY ASMARA 0023
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 5251
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 8220
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 2816
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 9258
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 7475
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 7894
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1798

S E C R E T BEIJING 002757

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DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/EAP CA, G, PRM, EAP, EAP/CM
GENEVA FOR STORELLA
BANGKOK FOR REFCOORD
CONSULATES FOR RSO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/25/2017

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CH](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: ERITREAN SEEKS REFUGE AT EMBASSY BEIJING, REFERRED
TO UNHCR

Classified By: REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER ROBERT A. ECKERT.
REASONS, 1.4 (b/d)

11. (S/NF) Summary: In the early morning hours of April 20 a man telephoned the Embassy seeking assistance. He said he was a member of an Eritrean delegation visiting China and believed he would be in danger if he returned to his country. After a face to face discussion with the man and RSO consultations with the Political section he was referred to the Beijing office of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). SIMO was notified. End Summary

12. (S/NF) A man telephoned Post One of US Embassy Beijing on April 20, at approximately 0120 hours seeking assistance. He stated he was a member of a delegation from a third country visiting China and he feared returning to his home country. The Marine followed the regular procedures, asked him to call back and then notified the pertinent duty officers. Members of both RSO and SIMO responded. It was determined he was in Beijing, believed his life to be in danger if he returned to his country and could not be contacted during normal business hours. A location in Beijing away from any US Facilities was selected to meet him and gather additional details face to face rather than over the phone.

13. (S/NF) At approximately 0300 hours, the face to face meeting occurred between the man and an Assistant Regional Security Officer. It was found that the man was a political officer and delegation member from Eritrea who had been invited to China. The man's name is HAILESLASSIE, Mahari, born 05/14/1974 in Eritrea. He did not have a passport with him as it was held by his delegation security officer. He stated he is assigned to teach Political Thought and Economics Through Central Planning to political cadres in Eritrea. The delegation was invited by the Chinese Protocol Bureau of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. He stated he was scheduled to depart Beijing at noon of the same day.

14. (S/NF) As a student in 2000, Mr. HAILESLASSIE was arrested, jailed, and put in prison for three months for his activities supporting governmental reform in Eritrea. He said while he was in prison he was tortured. As a college graduate he was given a job in the government but added he had been under surveillance ever since being released from prison. He noted the surveillance had become more severe in

the last two years. He stated that he had made comments in China that had been questioned by the Eritrean delegation Security officer. This situation, combined with the fact that the security officer held his passport, caused him to fear for his life upon return to Eritrea. He asked for asylum in the US. The ARSO informed him of U.S. procedures for asylum cases.

15. (S/NF) SIMO declined any contact with the person. After RSO consultation with a member of the political section it was decided to follow standard practice and refer him to the UNHCR. He was provided with detailed instructions on when, where, and how to contact the Beijing office of the UNHCR.

16. (U) Beijing POC is ARSO Eric Hyde.
RANDT